

EXHIBIT NO.

5

DATE

1-17-07

BILL NO.

SB 89

Good afternoon. My name is Jenny Kaleczyc and I am an attorney in private practice. My husband and I have a daughter who will turn 3 next week and a son who is four months old. Both my children received, or in the case of the little one, are receiving exclusively breastmilk. I am here today to speak in support of SB 89.

As the other proponents of this bill have told you, breastmilk is the healthiest choice for babies and their mothers. What I want to tell you today is why having workers who breastfeed is good for working mothers and good for business.

At the outset, I'd like to explain to members of the committee a little bit about how breastfeeding works, since this is something that I did not understand until I had a baby. A mother's body produces milk on a supply and demand basis. That means if a woman does not either nurse her baby or simulate nursing by expressing milk with a pump, before long her body will stop making milk. A woman who works full time and wants to provide her baby exclusively breastmilk would need to pump or nurse approximately three times a day, every day, at regular intervals. I did this until my daughter was a year old and am doing the same for my son.

### **Supporting breastfeeding in the workplace is important to moms**

Having a new baby is a life-changing event for any parent. And just when new moms begin to adjust to life with the baby--and by this what I really mean is no sleep--most Montana women have to go back to work.

A few short weeks after my daughter was born, I returned to my job at the Montana Supreme Court with my breast pump in tow. I found a dingy utility closet to pump in. I wedged a chair into the tiny windowless room where the holiday decorations and seldom used law books were stored and expressed milk for my baby. The room was small and dirty. There was nowhere to set my pump and bottles. When I was done, I had to walk through the court chambers with my pump parts to a sink to wash them. The whole thing had an air of shame to it. And I was one of the lucky ones just because I had a place to pump at all. In my current job, I am fortunate to have a private office where I can just close the door during my twice-daily pumping sessions for my son.

But I am here today to speak for all Montana mothers who pump in unsanitary bathroom stalls or in their car when it is 10 below zero or 90 degrees. Even more so, I am here today to speak for the Montana mothers who are too intimidated or embarrassed to even try expressing milk for their babies when they go back to work.

I frequently meet women who say they "couldn't" breastfeed because they had to go back to work. When an employer says, "we think breastfeeding is important enough that we'll set a space aside and let you use your break time to do it," it speaks volumes. Any barriers we can take down

in order to make it easier for moms to breastfeed their babies will make a difference. I believe just a little bit of encouragement will go a long way.

### **Supporting breastfeeding at work pays off for employers**

Encouraging employees to breastfeed also creates a financial boon for employers. Because breastfed babies are on the average healthier than formula-fed babies, studies have shown that breastfeeding moms are 7 times less likely to be absent from work to care for a sick baby.<sup>1</sup>

In one study, researchers compared 1000 formula-fed babies to 1000 exclusively breastfed babies. The formula-fed babies had 2033 excess visits to the doctor and 212 excess days of hospitalization. Assuming all these babies have parents who work outside the home, another way to put it is 2033 times a parent had to miss work to take a baby to a doctor's appointment and 212 times a parent had to miss work to tend to a sick baby in the hospital--all for illnesses preventable by breastfeeding.<sup>2</sup>

Breastfeeding is so beneficial that even insurance companies are realizing they can save money by encouraging it. One insurance company studied the issue and found that the additional health care cost of a formula fed baby over a breastfed baby in the first year of life is \$1435.<sup>3</sup>

Studies also show that supporting moms who want to pump breastmilk at work increases employee loyalty, productivity and helps with recruiting qualified employees.<sup>4</sup> Also, researchers are finding that new moms are more likely to return to work rather than stay home after maternity leave if they know they will be able to pump milk at work.<sup>5</sup>

Some large employers now even provide rooms specially designed to accommodate nursing moms. These employers are finding they get a \$4-5 return for each dollar they invest in supporting breastfeeding employees.<sup>6</sup>

In the written testimony I submitted, I listed the citation for each study I mentioned and would be glad to provide committee members with copies of any of them at your request.

### **Conclusion**

There aren't that many things government can do that indisputably help working mothers, improve their babies' health, reduce health care costs, reduce employee absenteeism and increase worker productivity that doesn't cost taxpayers a penny. But this bill is one of them. It is truly pro-family.

I urge your support of this important legislation and would be happy to answer any questions.

1. Geisel, Jerry. 1994. "Lactation programs yield multiple benefits." *Business Insurance* 28 (5), p. 12.
2. Ball, Thomas M., MD, MPH and Anne L. Wright, PHD, *Pediatrics* Vol. 103 No. 4 April 1999, pp. 870-876 .
3. Kaiser Permanente Study, 1994-1995. <http://www.visi.com/%7Eartmama/kaiser.htm>
4. Geisel, Jerry. 1994. "Lactation programs yield multiple benefits." *Business Insurance* 28 (5), p. 12 and Shalowitz, Deborah. 1993. "Lactation program speeds mothers' return to work." *Business Insurance* 27 (40), p. 21.
5. Katcher, Avrum. L. And Mary Grace Lanese. 1985. "Breast-feeding by employed mothers: A reasonable accommodation in the work place." *Pediatrics*, 75 (4): 644-647.
6. Shalowitz, Deborah. 1993. "Lactation program speeds mothers' return to work." *Business Insurance* 27 (40), p. 21.